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CHAPTER 9: 17-38

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapse's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapse's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of Matthew 9: 17-38

Verse 17- *Neither do men put new wine, &c.* Christ shows by a threefold similitude, that His disciples must not fast when He was present. 1. By the parable of the Spouse and the wedding. 2. Of the old and new garment. 3. Of the new wine, and the old bottles of skin. The sense is this: "As new wine, or must, by the violence of its fermenting spirit, and its heat, bursts the old skins, because they are worn and weak, and so there is a double loss, both of wine and skins; therefore new wine must be poured into new skins, that being strong, they may be able to bear the force of the must: so in like manner, new austerities and fasts must not be imposed as yet upon My disciples, lest their spirits should be broken, and they depart from Me. But I wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost."

Truly, saith Horace, "Unless the vessel be clean, it will taint whatever you pour into it." So also a pure and perfect life agrees not except with a mind cleansed from vices, pure and renewed. Otherwise both the austerity and the mind itself are full of

they could make out of the people. The Scribes, says S. Chrysostom, were not so much shepherds of the sheep as wolves, for in word they taught them false and perverse doctrines, and by their example they destroyed the souls of the simple ones, especially in that they called Christ a magician, and so alienated from Him the minds of those who were well disposed to Him.

Verse 37- *The harvest truly is plenteous, &c.* The harvest He calls the multitude of the people prepared to receive the Gospel, the seeds of which the Prophets had sown. Whence, as S. Austin saith, “the holy Apostles reaped among the Jews, but sowed among the Gentiles, because they delivered to them the first doctrines of the faith, as it were seed.”

Verse 38- *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, &c.,* namely, that He would send you, O ye Apostles, and your co-adjutors and successors, and inspire them with the spirit of wisdom and zeal, assiduously to preach and to labour, that this so copious a harvest perish not.

The Lord of the harvest. Thus, tacitly, Christ calls Himself. As S. Chrysostom says, the Lord sent His Apostles to reap that which He Himself had sown by the Prophets. Remigius adds, The number of labourers was increased by the appointment of seventy-two other disciples.

Here ends the early manhood of Christ and His Acts from His Baptism and first Passover until His second Passover. That is to say, it is the history of one year and some months. This was the thirty-first year of Christ’s age.

sourness and bitterness.

An old proverb is similar to this parable, “A new sieve, a new peg,” which Nonias quotes from Varro’s *Eumenides*, where Zeno is said to have first hung a new sect upon a new peg, because Zeno founded at Athens a new sect of the Stoics, which he did by new reasonings and paradoxes. There is also the proverb, “A new swallow, a new spring.” Whence the Rhodians, on the testimony of Theognis, by yearly public proclamation, invite the swallows in the springtime, “Come, come, O swallow, and bring us a good season and a Prosperous year.”

Verse 18- *While he spake these things, &c.* A ruler, namely of the synagogue, as Luke adds, who presided over the synagogue in Capernaum. For these things took place by the shore of the sea of Galilee, near Capernaum, as is plain from Mark v. 21, 22. Mark speaks of him as one of the rulers of the synagogue, for there were several rulers of the same synagogue, who taught and guided the people who assembled in it, in the same way that priests do now in churches. His name was Jairus, as Mark records. This is the same as the Hebrew *Jair*, meaning, *that which shall be resplendent, or shall give light*, from the root אור *or*, “he hath shone.” For Jairus, as the ruler of the synagogue, illuminated the people, and taught the Law.

Worshipped him, that is, fell at his feet, as Mark and Luke have it.

My daughter, twelve years old, as Luke says, is even now dead, but come. Matthew, studying brevity, relates in substance what was done, rather than the exact historical sequence. For, as is plain from Mark and Luke, the child was not yet dead when her father first came to Christ and said, *Come and lay thine hand upon her, and she shall live.* As Christ and Jairus were going together, some one ran, and told Jairus that his daughter was dead, and that, the case being now desperate, he should come away from Christ. Then Christ, as it would seem, confirms his wavering faith, and Jairus hopefully leads Him to his house, and then, either by implication, or else in express words, asks Him to raise his daughter from death, as Matthew here relates.

S. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain differently. *She is dead, i.e.,* she is near death, for in this way those who are wretched, are wont to exaggerate their miseries, that they may more easily obtain the aid for which they seek. S. Austin (lib. 2 *de Consens. ,Evang. c. 28*), adds, that the father by reckoning the time which his journey had taken, might suppose that she, whom he had left in her last agony, was now dead.

But come, lay thine hand. Jairus had seen, or heard of many sick who had been healed at Capernaum by the laying on of hands; and he hoped that Christ would do the same for his daughter. The faith of Jairus was less than

that of the centurion, for he believed that Christ, even when absent, could heal his servant by a word.

Verse 19- *And Jesus arose.* It is probable that Christ was sitting and teaching the multitude when He rose up at the request of Jairus. Observe the readiness and promptitude of Christ to succour the afflicted. Let Christians imitate Him in this. S. Chrysostom adds, that when Christ first went with Jairus, He proceeded somewhat slowly, and conversed for some time with the woman with the issue of blood, that in the meantime the girl might die, and that there might be a manifest proof of the resurrection.

Verse 20- *Behold, a woman, &c.* She was from Cæsarea, a place called Dan, afterwards Paneas. We learn this from Eusebius (*H. E.* 7. 14). S. Mark relates at greater length this history of the healing of the woman. It will therefore be more convenient to speak of it in the Commentary upon his Gospel (chap. v.).

Verse 23- *And when Jesus came, &c. Minstrels* were persons who, as S. Ambrose says (*in S. Luc.* c. 8. 52), were hired at funerals, to chant doleful ditties, by which they moved the relations and neighbours to sobbing and tears. There were women minstrels as well as men. Jeremiah speaks of the former (ix. 17), "Call for the mourning women, that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with water." This was not only a Jewish custom: it was also common among the Gentiles.

Minstrels. Gr. *flute-players.* Theophylact says, that the ancients at the funerals of men sounded with trumpets; but at the funerals of boys and virgins played upon flutes, as in this case of the daughter of Jairus. This was done, he says, in token of their virginity.

Verse 24- *He said, Give place, &c.* The girl was really dead, as is plain from verse 18. Christ, however, denied this, and said that she was asleep. 1. Because as S. Jerome says, to God and Himself, to whom all things live, she was not dead, and because she was to be raised again at the Judgment Day. Wherefore the dead are continually called in the Scriptures, *those who sleep.* 2. And better, because this girl was not dead in the sense in which the multitude thought her dead, namely, altogether and absolutely dead, as though it were not possible for her to be recalled to life, when by the extraordinary providence of God that very thing was shortly about to be done. Thus she was not so much really dead, as sleeping for a little while. Thus too, when Lazarus was dead, Christ speaks of him as sleeping. (John xi. 11.) So Maldonatus, Jansen, and others explain. Moreover the soul of this deceased girl, like the souls of others whom Christ and His saints have raised from the dead, was not yet judged, or condemned to hell, or purgatory. But God's judgment was suspended, because it was His will to bring her back to life.

S. Chrysostom adds, Christ shows by this expression that it was as easy to Him to raise the dead, as to awake men out of sleep, and therefore we should not fear death, for when He comes nigh, it is no longer death but sleep.

Verse 34- *But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.* As among the angels, so also among the devils, some are lower, others higher in rank, and princes, viz., those of the higher orders who fell, who were of a grander nature; for that which was theirs naturally remained in the devils after their fall. Thus those who fell of the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones are princes among the lower orders of the Dominions, the Principalities, and the Powers; and these again are princes over the inferior fallen orders of Virtues, Archangels, and Angels. Thus even among rebel soldiers there are standard-bearers, colonels, captains. For without these an army cannot be marshalled and governed. Lucifer is the prince of all the devils, as S. Michael is of all the angels, as I have said on Apoc. xii. Observe the different dispositions of the Pharisees and the multitude. The multitude, with artless candour, magnified the miracles of Christ as done by a Divine Person, even the Messiah. But the Pharisees were envious of Christ, and had indignation against Him, and said that He was a magician, and had a familiar demon, by whose magic art He did these wonderful things. This was the awful blasphemy which Christ refutes in chap xii. 25. But now, meekly bearing and despising their charges, He proceeds in His course of doing good, and confutes their blasphemies by fresh miracles.

Verse 35- *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, &c. Villages,* in the Vulgate, *castella.* *Castrum* is a place surrounded by walls, and is greater than a castle and less than a town, from whence the diminutive *castellum* means a *little town.* These *castella*, then, were forts, or small walled towns; and the meaning became extended to signify villages without walls, which the Greeks call *κώμας.*

Christ visited not only inhabitants of cities, and those who were had in honour, but poor men and rustics dwelling in villages, and taught and healed them. Let priests and religious imitate this example of Christ. Desire not, O preacher, to hold forth in the magnificent cathedrals of great cities, for Christ taught in villages, as well as in cities, and thus He was the Catechist and Preacher, as well as the Redeemer, of the sparsely scattered and poor rustics.

Verse 36- *But when he saw the multitudes, &c. Had compassion,* the Greek is *ἔσπλαγχνίσθη,* that is. *pitied them from His inmost bowels.* This is the same word, as to its use, as the Hebrew *דחך* *rechem,* "bowels," and so, *mercifulness.*

As sheep having no shepherd. There is no animal so simple, careless, improvident, so exposed to be the prey of wolves and other wild beasts, and therefore so needing a keeper, as a sheep. Christ takes notice that the Scribes and priests, did not care for the good of the people, to lead them in the way of salvation. And so they were not pastors, but shearers of the sheep, who only cared for the milk and the fleece, that is, for what profit

Verse 30- *And Jesus straitly charged them.* The Greek is, *ἐνεβριμήσατο*, the Vulgate *comminatus est*: which means literally, *He sharply and sternly threatened them*. He did this to show His strong dislike of ostentation in His miracles, and of vain glory, and to teach us to dislike it.

Verse 31- *But they spread abroad his fame in all that country.* These blind men did not offend against the strict charge of Christ by publishing His miracle, as Calvin would have it, for they persuaded themselves that Christ had done so, not by an absolute precept, but only out of modesty, for the reason I have given. And no wonder that the blind men thought so, for the Fathers are persuaded that, Christ spoke in this sense. Hear S. Chrysostom: “To another He says, *Declare the glory of God*; surely He teaches that they are to be rebuked, who wish to praise us for our own sakes, but not if they do so for the glory of God.” And S. Jerome says, “The Lord, because of humility, avoiding the glory of boasting, gave this command; but they, in remembrance of His grace, were not able to keep silent about His kindness.”

Verse 32- *Thy brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.* Gr. *κωφὸν*, which rather means *deaf* than *dumb*, but the word, says S. Jerome, is used indifferently, in both senses, in Scripture. For they who are deaf from their birth, are usually dumb; for they who cannot hear anything, are not able to learn sounds and words, so as to speak them. For we only learn what we hear. Wherefore Christ did not require faith from this man as He did from others. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact.

Moreover, the word *dumb* is not to be referred to the devil, as Cajetan thinks, but to the man, as is clear from the Greek *δαμονιζόμενον*. The Syriac translation makes this plain, *They offered unto him a dumb man, in whom was a demon*. This was a different demoniac from the one of whom Luke speaks (xi. 14), for of this latter Matthew speaks below (xii. 22). Here Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Him (chap. xxxv.), “Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.”

Verse 33- *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.* From this it appears that the demon made this man deaf and dumb, who was not so naturally. He did this by hindering the use of his tongue and ears, so that, when he was cast out, the dumb man both spake and heard. How wonderful was the benignity and mercy of Christ by which He made whole a man who neither asked nor thought about it—yea, who was unable either to speak or think, for he was possessed by a devil—simply at the prayer of those who brought him. Verily, wheresoever there is greatest affliction, there are most nigh the mercy and help of Christ, according to the words, “The abyss” of our misery, “calls to the abyss” of the Divine mercy. (Ps. xlii. 7.)

The multitudes marvelled, saying, &c. Neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Isaiah, nor any other of the prophets, performed so many and so great miracles as Jesus did. Therefore He was greater than they, and so was the Messiah, or Christ. They preferred Christ, says S. Chrysostom, to all others, because He quickly healed an infinite number of incurable diseases.

And they laughed him to scorn, &c. Christ, says Chrysostom, permitted this, that the girl’s death might be better attested, and so the greater the belief in Him when He did raise her from death.

Verse 25- *But when the people were put forth, he went in, with, says S. Mark, the parents of the child, and Peter, James, and John.* Christ put forth the crowd, because they were not worthy, says the *Interlinear*, to see that which they would not believe. S. Jerome says, they were unworthy to behold the mystery of the resurrection, who had derided Him who was about to raise. Christ teaches us when we are doing some great work, to avoid multitudes and tumult, which distract the mind, that we may give the full force of our mind to our work and to prayer.

Tropologically, S. Gregory says, “That the dead soul may arise, the multitude of worldly cares must be cast out of the heart.”

Symbolically, the *Gloss* says, “When the scornful deriders have been rejected, Christ enters into the minds of the elect.”

Anagogically, S. Hilary: “How few are the elect may be understood from the multitude being cast out.”

Took her by the hand. That is, like a magistrate He laid His hand upon the corpse, as upon one who was guilty. He seizes it, and conquers it, and, as though it were a captive, He subjugates it to Himself. The Greek is *ἐκράτησε*, and the word denotes the efficacy of the power and empire of Christ. He held the hand of the dead body, as though ruling and commanding it, and so mightily operating upon it as to raise it from death unto life. For by His hand He raised the body from the earth, and recalled the soul into it from the unseen world, saying to it in Syriac, *Talitha cumi*—that is, *Maid, arise*. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son giveth life to whom he will.” (John v. 21.)

And the maid arose. Greek *ἠγέρθη*—*i.e.*, was roused up, and awoke. Christ raised her to life, as easily as if He were waking one who was asleep. Mark adds, *And he commanded that something should be given her to eat*. This was that the resurrection might be seen to be real.

Verse 26- *And the fame hereof . . . into all that land*—that is, into the whole of Galilee. All men spread abroad the news, and celebrated this resurrection of the maid by Christ, speaking of it as a new, unheard of, and Divine work. And in so doing they preached Christ, that He was a prophet—yea, the Messiah.

SS. Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome say that these things are an allegory of the Church. The woman with the issue of blood, who received health and the salvation of her soul before the daughter of the chief of the synagogue, or the Jews, is the people of the Gentiles; for after the fulness of the Gentiles has entered into the Church, the Jews shall be converted, and saved at the end of the world. Whence the *Gloss* says, Jairus—*i.e.*, illuminating, or illuminated, is Moses who, beholding the Lord about to come in the flesh, prays for his daughter—that is, the Synagogue, who, brought up by the Law and the Prophets, languishing in error, is dead in sins, but nevertheless is in the house—that is, in the worship of God. And S. Jerome says, “Even until this day, the Synagogue lies dead, and they who seem to be teachers—the Jewish Rabbin—are flute-players and minstrels, singing a mournful chant; and the Jews are not a multitude of believers, but of people making a noise.”

Tropologically, both the woman healed of the issue of blood, and Jairus’ daughter raised from the dead, denote the sinful soul, which Christ raises from the death of sin to the life of grace; but first, the friends and minstrels must be driven out—that is, the depraved companions and the wicked spirits; for they soothe the soul with their ditties, and detain it in the death of sin. They make flattering suggestions. They chant that sin is not deadly, or that some indulgence must be granted to youth, that all may be atoned for by repentance when old, and so on. Thus Christ touches the soul. By His mighty power He takes her by the hand, gives her life, and raises her up from the deep of death to the summit of life. By-and-by she is bidden *to walk*, that is, do good works; and *to eat*, that is, to feed on the Eucharist, that it may strengthen and confirm her life.

Only the three chief Apostles are present, that it may be signified that Christ, by the Apostles and their successors, will raise sinners from death; and that this is the prime and chief power of the Apostles, concerning which Christ saith, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John xx.23.)

Lastly, Christ is recorded to have raised three dead persons only to life—first, this maid of twelve years old, whom He raised immediately upon her decease. The second was the young man, the widow’s son, whom He raised as he was being carried to the tomb. The third was Lazarus, whom He called out of his sepulchre, after he had lain there four days.

First, the young girl denotes those who from age—for young people are fervid and inexperienced—or from frailness, or from infirmity, fall into sin, but very soon, being touched by God, see their fall, and easily repent, and rise again. Secondly, the young man denotes those who have fallen repeatedly into sin, and are verging upon a habit of sin. These are with more difficulty recalled to life. They need more powerful and efficacious grace. So it came to pass that Christ commanded the bearers of the young man to stand still. And touching the bier, He said in a commanding manner, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*. Thirdly, Lazarus denotes those who have grown old in sin. These are with great difficulty recalled. They need the most efficacious grace and vocation of God. And the symbol or indication of this, was Christ’s groaning, weeping,

and crying with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*. Therefore Rabanus and others think that, symbolically, by the raising of the girl is meant the repentance of one who has only sinned in thought: by the young man, the repentance of those who have sinned in deed as well as in thought: by Lazarus, their repentance, who have contracted a habit and practice of sin. Lastly, Christ here teaches that secret and light sins are blotted out by secret repentance, and therefore the girl was raised in the house. But public sins need a public remedy, therefore, he recalled the young man and Lazarus to life publicly, before multitudes.

Verse 27- *And passing on from thence, i.e.*, from Jairus’ house, *two blind men*, &c. These blind men had conceived the hope of recovering their sight from Christ from the many and great miracles which they had heard were done by Him. Therefore they said, *have mercy upon us*, pity our blindness, which is the greatest misery, and restore to us the light of the sun. We believe that Thou art the Son of David, that is, the Messiah, to whom this healing of blindness and other diseases has been promised by the Prophets. (Is. xxxv. 5; lxi. 1.) For Messiah had been promised to David as his Son, that He should be sprung from his posterity. Wherefore Messiah was always called by the Jews, *the Son of David*. Therefore these men, whose bodily eyes were blind, had sharp-sighted minds, as a certain writer exclaims, “O that darkness brighter than any light: O those most piercing eyes of blindness!”

Verse 28- *And when he was come into the house, &c. The house*, that is to say, His own, which Christ had hired at Capernaum, as I have said on chap. iv. 13. Christ did not answer the blind men as they cried unto Him in the way, and asked their sight. He put them off until He came into the house, 1. That He might prove them, and kindle their faith and desire of healing. 2. That He might teach the necessity of persevering in prayer. *Believe ye*, He says, *that I am able to do this?* He does not say, *that I am about to do it*, but, *that I am able to do it?* For faith is properly in the Omnipotence of God. This is why we say in the Creed, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” This faith then gave rise to hope, insomuch that these blind men conceived the hope that what Christ was *able* to do, that He *would* do. Away then with the faith of the Innovators, by which they believe, that their sins have been forgiven to themselves in particular, for the merits of Christ, and, that they are justified, and sons of God. They believe, I say, in their own false imagination, by which they say that they most firmly believe it by Divine faith, when they only imagine it, and dream of it. For nothing can be believed, except what has been revealed by God. But it has not been revealed to thee, O Luther, that thou art justified (*justum*), therefore thou canst not *believe* it.

Verse 29- *Then he touched their eyes, &c.* Christ heals them by the touch of His hands, to manifest their saving power. “The confession of their mouth is requited by the touch of kindness,” says the *Gloss*.